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ABSTRACT

Independent schools have traditionally held the view that education must address the whole person, not only the intellectual, artistic, and physical dimensions of life but also the fourth dimension, the spiritual or religious dimension. The spiritual dimension has a place in school life, and character development or moral education is primarily the duty of the school faculty. The Council for Religion in Independent Schools (CRIS) conducted a survey of independent school heads on the role that moral values and character have in the teacher's responsibilities and in selection of teaching staff. The most frequently listed personal values that the 21 school heads looked for in teachers were integrity and love of youth. The social values most cited were concern for others and social awareness and conscience. Nearly one-half indicated that they look for evidence of specific values when recruiting and interviewing. Various interview techniques were used to elicit this information. Varying approaches were taken by the heads with regard to incorporating moral values criteria into teacher evaluations and inservice education. The heads were asked to list and rank several faculty roles. The most commonly listed role was role model or moral example, followed by listener and counselor. Most respondents indicated that they found no conflict between their search for academically excellent teachers and the search for moral or spiritual individuals. (IAH)

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EDUCATION IN THE FOURTH DIMENSION

Teachers and their Value Commitments

CRIS Perspectives on the School

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Excerpts from a presentation made at the SAIS 1989 Annual Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia

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Education in the Fourth Dimension: Teachers and Their Value Commitments

(excerpts from a presentation made at the SAIS 1989 Annual Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia)

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Education of the whole person

Independent Schools have a longstanding tradition of understanding education to comprise far more than the learning of facts and the acquisition of skills. Education, we say, must be of the whole person; it must develop not only the intellectual, artistic, and athletic dimensions of life but also a fourth dimension--the moral, the spiritual, the religious. Though we understand this fourth dimension in many different ways, we generally agree on the propriety of its place in our school life, at least to some degree.

The importance of the moral and spiritual dimension may surface in a variety of ways: in an overall religious or ethical emphasis; in community service programs; in courses devoted to religion and/or ethics; in courses <u>not</u> devoted to religion or ethics in which the religious and ethical dimension of life is not ignored; in chapel programs; in the ethos of classrooms, common areas, and residential halls; and so on.

Character development

We sometimes refer to the acceptance of this dimension into our schools as having the goal of "character development" or "moral education." One of the reasons parents choose independent schools is the hope that this kind of education will have a moral effect on their children, understood sometimes as a corrective effect and sometimes simply as a developmental effect. Thus it is the <u>design</u> of trustees and administrators to <u>promote</u> character development, and it is the <u>desire</u> of parents to <u>perceive</u> character development in their children. But it is primarily the duty of the faculty to provide the character development designed and desired by others. After all, the nitty-gritty, day-to-

A high calling

day life of a school is determined fundamentally by the sorts of relationships that exist between teachers and students--not parents and students, or administrators and students--and by the relationships among students, who receive many of their guidelines from faculty. This daily but high calling of the faculty was recognized long ago by John Phillips in the Original Deed of Gift, Phillips Exeter Academy:

> **Above all, it is expected that the attention of instructors to the disposition of the minds and morals of the youth under their charge will exceed every other care; well considering that though goodness without knowledge is weak and feeble, yet knowledge without goodness is dangerous, and that both united form the noblest character; and lay the surest foundation of usefulness to mankind.**
>
> *(Quoted in frontispiece, Knowledge Without Goodness is Dangerous: Moral Education in Boarding Schools [ed. Charles L. Terry; Exeter, NH: Phillips Exeter Academy Press, 1981])*

The role of the teacher

This central role of the teacher in the character-education mission of the school raises the issue of the kind of teachers we have and we want to have in our schools. What values, what "habits of the heart," what moral or spiritual direction, do schools hope their teachers will have? When a school asks this question, it is really not asking a question merely about the character of its faculty but about its essential mission. It is asking a question about the character desired for the school as a community and, ultimately, about the character desired for its individual students. In other words, the kind of faculty a school seeks both reflects the kind of graduates it hopes to produce and determines, to a significant degree, the kind of graduates it actually does produce. As one head put it:

"Do as I do"

> The hopes for our children are and must be our hopes for ourselves. We cannot presume on them what we do not presume on ourselves by way of academic and personal virtue.

Or, as another said, commenting on the connection between the school's mission statement and the virtues it seeks in its faculty:

> We seek faculty who share our stated goal: to graduate a student who is open to growth, intellectually competent, religious, loving and committed to doing justice.

The Council for Religion in Independent Schools (CRIS) conducted a survey of school heads in the fall of 1989. Of the 21 respondents, 17 were male, 4 female. They headed 15 co-ed, 4 girls' and 2 boys' schools. There were 15 day schools represented, 4 day/boarding, and 2 boarding.

1989 survey by CRIS

The survey consisted of six questions requiring narrative responses. For this small, initial survey all respondents were affiliated with schools belonging to CRIS. Following are the six survey questions:

1. What is your vision of the kind of teacher you want in your school? What moral and/or religious values (beliefs, attitudes, habits, actions) do you hope for in teachers?
2. Please underline those values and virtues that you deem most important and briefly explain why you consider these values to be so important.
3. Briefly, how do the answers to questions #1 and #2 affect the way you recruit, interview, evaluate, and provide in-service for teachers?
4. How do the answers to questions #1 and #2 reflect (or differ from) the stated mission and goals of your schools?
5. If you were to describe the ideal role(s) of a faculty member in your school today, what terms would you use? (e.g., provider of information, tutor, counselor, role model, listening ear, gadfly, consciousness-raiser, etc.) If

(continued)

possible, please rank these in order of importance.

6. In your experience, have you found a conflict between your search for excellent teachers, academically speaking, and your search for teachers who embody your vision of appropriate moral and spiritual values?

As you can imagine, there was an incredible variety of answers to each of these questions, but I would like to give you a summary of the answers provided by the 21 respondents to our survey.

Question No. 1

No. 1: Integrity
No. 2: Love of youth

PERSONAL VALUES — The two most frequently listed values in this category were integrity, noted by 15 respondents, and love of youth, named by 8. The former was sometimes joined with or described as honesty, morality, or consistency. The latter was sometimes spoken of as commitment to or enjoyment of youth. No survey came back without one or the other of these values mentioned.

Other oft-named personal values, mentioned about 20-30% of the time each, were sensitivity; passion or energy; compassion; openness, especially intellectual but also relational; self-confidence; and humility. Other values named at least twice were cheerfulness; industry or fortitude; optimism; possession of a sense of humor; self-discipline; respect for others; reflectiveness; and tolerance.

Does this teacher enjoy life?

If one combines cheerfulness, optimism, and possession of a sense of humor, one realizes that a large number of heads want teachers who seem to enjoy life. Similarly, combining industry and self-discipline, it seems that heads indicate a desire for teachers who work hard.

At the risk of over-simplification, it now seems possible to suggest a consensus on the personal values of the ideal teacher according to our survey. He or she possesses:

"Ideal teacher"

integrity
love of youth
sensitivity
zest for growth
confidence without arrogance
enjoyment of life
industry
respect for others

Social values

SOCIAL VALUES -- Although respondents expressed their desires in different ways, it is clear that heads are looking for teachers with two qualities: first, concern for others and for the common good; and, second, possession of a social awareness and conscience. Some heads clearly expect all faculty to have not only a social conscience and concern for others but also a practical demonstration of this commitment. A significant number of school heads expressed the traditional independent school theme of involvement in the school beyond the "letter of the law." Others seem to want their faculty to be more involved outside the school gates.

Spiritual/ religious commitment . . .

Nearly one-third of our respondents said specifically that they are looking for teachers who believe in God or have some kind of deep religious or spiritual commitment. Several heads expressed the strongly felt opinion that, in their experience, the best teachers are nearly always deeply religious.

It is not the orientation toward God or the spiritual realm per se that they seek, but the results of this commitment in their dealings with others.

. . . and the attitudes that commitment produces

What we seem to find, then, overall are school heads looking for teachers who possess what the heads perceive as religion, at its best, to offer: a deep, more-than-purely-materialistic orientation to life that produces personal morality and concern for others. In other words, our respondents look to religion or spirituality, however they define it, primarily to generate the personal and social virtues alluded to in the foregoing paragraphs.

Which values deemed most important?

Question 2

MOST IMPORTANT VALUES -- In general, respondents listed one to three most significant values or virtues they looked for in teachers. It may be most helpful to look at some of the actual answers:

- sense of morality; personal integrity
- integrity; concern for others; commitment to justice
- integrity; compassion; intellectual curiosity
- honesty; cheerfulness; good judgment
- love and service like that of Christ
- faith, hope, and charity (faith in the goodness of others, hope for a better future, and love for all)
- sense of self-worth; dedication to education in broad sense; concern for others (especially those in need)
- competence and caring
- humility; commitment to the affective as well as the cognitive; serenity
- sensitivity; integrity; industry
- compassion; energy
- enthusiasm or "passion"; integrity; conviction; lack of self-consciousness
- respect for the individual; respect for democracy
- commitment to the school's mission and values

It is quite clear which values are rated most important by these heads; personal integrity and honesty, on the one hand; and concern and compassion for others, on the other. In addition, it seems that a positive self-image and a commitment to education beyond the intellectual dimension also rank very high on the list of values. Conspicuously absent, with one exception, are any of the specifically religious values. This seems to confirm the suggestion made earlier that school heads are looking for the personal and social results of religious commitment, not the commitment itself.

Question 3

VALUES AND . . . RECRUITING, INTERVIEWING, EVALUATING, AND IN-SERVICE -- This question

struck some participants as vague or impossible to answer. 15% said it did not affect their recruiting at all. But nearly half of the respondents said they do look for evidence of specific values even at this early stage; specifically mentioned were: a caring attitude, exposure to a broad view of the world, commitment to the development of the whole person, agreement with the school's values, and lack of religious dogmatism. Methods for achieving this goal include being explicit about the school's philosophy in recruitment literature and reviewing resumes or personal essays for evidence of experiences consonant with the school's values and concerns.

Recruiting and interviewing teachers

For what do heads probe in an interview concerning values, and how do they do it? Some probe for specific values, others for "personality" in a general sense, others for willingness to contribute to the school outside the classroom, others for how prospects will relate to students, and still others for how they would handle certain moral situations.

Some interviewing practices

To do this, some heads ask specifically for a person's educational as well as personal philosophy. Some use questions about life experiences to obtain answers to such questions indirectly. Similarly, several heads, even from non-religious schools, deliberately bring up the subject of religion, while at least one respondent was forbidden to do so by the school's policies. Some heads pose questions about how a prospect would handle a specific, often true-to-life situation, such as cheating. These questions are intended not only to reveal values but also to suggest how a person makes decisions. Other heads ask questions about long-range goals, use of leisure time, and so on to get a feel for a person's values.

In almost every case, the question of academic competence was ignored by the head (and judged instead by discussion with deans and department heads or by resume perusal), who focused solely on compatibility with the school's other dimensions.

Teachers' non-academic behavior is evaluated

As one would expect, many of our respondents said that teacher evaluations were based at least as much on their carrying out the non-academic mission of the school as on their teaching ability. Attentiveness to student needs, classroom atmosphere, human interaction skills, exemplary living befitting a role model, integrity, reflection of the school's values, and community participation were all named as criteria for evaluation.

One respondent stressed that their school specifically ignores such matters in faculty evaluation, using the evaluation process for professional growth based on classroom performance. Similarly, one head noted that, although the school expects teachers to be good role models, evaluation is based strictly on academic criteria, unless there is a case of blatant, flagrant unethical behavior. Both of these heads do look for teachers with certain values; they simply do not retain or dismiss teachers who fall short of their hopes.

What about in-service?

The final area under this question was in-service. Some heads told us that their in-service programs are generally oriented toward academic and professional growth. Some, however, indicated that value issues, such as how to make students more globally aware or how to curtail cheating, arise informally at most faculty meetings.

One head states that faculty meetings are used in part as sessions for mutual reminding of the school's values, while another attempts to remind faculty of their value commitments through occasional letters or small-group meetings as necessary. Others conduct in-service meetings that focus on personal problems or on the particular values of the school, such as stress, global awareness, or even a teacher's sense of humor. One school views its chapel program as a daily in-service meeting for faculty.

Question 4

STATED MISSION OR GOALS OF SCHOOL — To the question of congruence or conflict between a

head's hopes for teachers' values and the school's mission and philosophy, three-fourths of those who answered the question indicated that the two were fully in sync. Two respondents said they did not think there was conflict. One said there was generally no conflict but wished that the school placed more emphasis on the spiritual dimension. Another did feel great conflict, perceiving the school to be apathetic toward moral issues.

Question 5

Heads' views of teachers' roles

THE ROLE(S) OF THE TEACHER — In many ways, this question reveals a great deal about a head's particular educational philosophy. Although suggestions were offered on the survey, the ordering, rephrasing, or omitting of those suggestions is revealing, as is the adding of additional role titles.

Three respondents refused to answer the question as stated (which asks for a ranking of the roles in terms of importance), arguing that all the roles are important, none more than another, and stressing diversity. One such respondent pointed to the biblical model of various gifts constituting one body in support of this perspective. It is probably safe to say that most other respondents would support the idea of diverse functions and a diverse faculty, too. Another respondent simply said "being (fully) human is the teacher's role."

"Role model"

Most respondents, however, did list and rank several faculty roles. The most commonly listed role was "role model" or "moral example," named by 90% of those who listed roles, and ranked first, or only, by nearly two-thirds. The next most commonly listed roles were listener, named by almost 50% of the respondents, and counselor, named by 30%. Other roles named by 15-25% of the heads were consciousness-raiser; supporter or enhancer of self-esteem; inciter of thought and/or questioning; and provider of information.

Two respondents named "coach" as a faculty role, and each placed it at the top of the list. One defined "coach" in this sense as "one whose greatest success comes from someone else's achievement."

Other academic and non-academic roles

Other academic roles mentioned were exemplary scholar/student; lover of learning; helper of the less-gifted; learning facilitator; inspirer of learning; and tutor. Other non-academic roles listed were: supporter; friend; molder of character; mediator; healer; clown (possessing a sense of humor); student advocate; faculty citizen or colleague; and gadfly.

Question 6

FACULTY MORALITY AND ACADEMICS -- Do heads find a conflict between their search for excellent teachers, academically speaking, and their search for moral or spiritual individuals? About one-fourth of our respondents said "occasionally," commenting that either the interview process could not be expected to weed out all potential problems; the needs of enrollment and the shortness of time might cause hasty hiring; or completely unpredictable circumstances developed.

"Qualified teachers may lack moral and spiritual values, but no really excellent teachers lack them."

Most of our respondents, however, said "no" or "not really," though the search for the right faculty is, of course, incredibly time-consuming. In fact, according to answers here and elsewhere on the survey, a number of our respondents have found a close connection between teaching competence and a deep moral and spiritual life. And when there is conflict, some heads are willing to give preference to morality over academics. Here are a few comments:

- The moral/spiritual person is normally competent to teach, but the reverse is not always the case.
- Qualified teachers may lack moral and spiritual values, but no really excellent teachers lack them.
- Scholarly acumen is vital but secondary in the total picture. This is ironic given the fact that we are ultimately perceived as college preparatory (classroom preparation).
- I wish for this school . . . teachers who will depart from a lesson to speak of matters of ethical or social concern, who realize that lessons of life must supersede lessons of the day.

- I prefer faculty with a social conscience. I might even sacrifice capability in teaching for teaching that's important in life.

Concluding Remarks

"I am speaking of generosity, selflessness, compassion, service . . ., love . . ."

The classical, cardinal virtues (temperance, fortitude, prudence, justice) seem often to have absorbed or "converted" the theological virtues (faith, hope, and love). Many schools deem non-religious motivation and values as sufficient for teaching young people. The great theologians Augustine and Thomas believed that the theological virtues "converted" or perfected the cardinal virtues. I believe that the experience of teaching, especially teaching teenagers, confirms that hypothesis.

It seems to me that the extraordinary virtues associated with love are as needed today as the classical virtues associated with, say, fortitude, prudence, or justice. I am speaking of generosity, selflessness, compassion, service beyond the expected, love in the face of hate.

My final remarks are stimulated by an article in the December 1989 Atlantic Monthly, a long, provocative article by political scientist Glenn Tinder that is entitled "Can We Be Good Without God?"

The question he raises, and answers in the negative, is whether American political and social policy and morality can long survive with its foundation being taken out from underneath. That foundation, he argues convincingly, is philosophical and religious. But it is not the philosophy of the enlightenment or the religion of the deists; rather, it is biblical, especially New Testament religion, with its concern (according to Tinder) for the individual—for all individuals. The values of respect for the individual, equal rights, compassion for the poor, and so on, he claims, have no dependable philosophical roots other than biblical religion. The more that religion is removed from our culture, the sooner our culture will lose reasons for such values and--eventually--will lose the values themselves.

I offer these remarks not as a plea for making your schools religious. They simply constitute a plea not to exclude religion from the discussion of values at your school. Students are asking the profound questions, like "Why be good (moral)?" If we fail to discuss all the possible answers to that question, including the religious, our efforts at dealing with values, morality, and the full meaning of education will be in vain.